

Frequently Asked Questions About Deploying to the Balkans

Q: What are the Living Conditions like?

A: Conditions are less comfortable than in Central Region or CONUS. Civilians and military personnel are generally assigned housing according to grade and rank equivalency. Most facilities are communal; housing is mostly of a dormitory style, with little privacy, and there are no private bathrooms. All DA personnel (military and civilian) are required to stay on base during their tour, except when part of an organized event, sponsored by MWR or another DoD agency. MWR does its best to provide recreation for personnel, with videos and movies, as well as gym facilities. Food is provided by the military dining facilities and there are free laundry services.

Q: What kinds of facilities and services are available downrange?

A: Most major bases have Burger King, Robin Hood, Baskin-Robbins, Anthony's Pizza, Juice Bars, Cappuccino Bars, Cyber Huts, Phone Huts, MWR Recreation Tents or Huts, AAFES PX. There are also local concession stands which sell tourist type articles common to the local country, such as jewelry and other crafts.

Q: What kinds of benefits and special pay are civilians offered while downrange?

A: DA civilians receive all of the same basic pay and benefits they receive while not deployed. In addition, civilian employees may be eligible to receive other special benefits and pay such as per diem while traveling into/out of the Balkans, foreign post differential, and/or danger pay or imminent danger pay. Separate maintenance allowance may be authorized in certain circumstances under TCS conditions.

Q: I understand that when a military member is deployed downrange, they do not have to pay taxes for the month in which they are deployed. Does this tax-free benefit apply to civilians?

A: Unlike their military counterparts, U.S. Government employees are subject to different IRS tax provisions. Currently, there is no tax relief for U.S. Government employees, except in cases involving the loss of life due to terrorist or military action.

Q: How do I start my Foreign Post Differential and Danger Pay?

A: Claims for these allowances must be initiated by the employee through the Heidelberg Civilian Personnel Advisory Center and processed using the Standard Form (SF) 1190 Foreign Allowances Application, Grant, and Report revised version dated 1/98. The Heidelberg CPAC or the Downrange HR Representative can provide the employee with instruction in form completion and will counsel employees on eligibility and repayment (should overpayment occur). FPD begins on the 43rd day of duty for employees on detail and Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY). FPD for employees on TCS (Temporary Change of Station) begins on the date of arrival at post.

Q: Do I wear a uniform while I am downrange? What other special gear do I need before I leave?

A: Department of Army civilians who visit or are deployed to Bosnia, Macedonia or Kosovo MUST travel with their home station issued helmet and flak vest. It must be readily available if the need arises for its use. Civilian employees are still required to wear a Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) when visiting and deployed to these countries. You can purchase the uniform at a military clothing sales store and will be reimbursed. Patrol caps (BDU soft caps) will be worn by military members and civilians.

Q: What type of training do I need before I go downrange? Do I need to bring anything to the training?

A: Civilian employees attend Individual Replacement Training (IRT). Phase I is completed at the unit or organizational level and consists two training videos which cover a variety of downrange topics. Check with your community or unit Operations (G-3) to obtain these materials. If still unable to locate the videos, contact the IRT at Hohenfels and they may be able to provide you a POC in your area. Phase II is a Situational Training Exercise, which is conducted for one day at Hohenfels. Employees are required to take their flak jacket and helmet to this training, and must wear sturdy all terrain shoes or boots, no tennis shoes may be worn. Check with the IRT to see if a change of clothing for after the training is required.

Q: Do I need to have a physical or any immunizations prior to deployment? What about the anthrax vaccination?

A: Yes, you will need to have a government-administered physical examination at the home station prior to deployment. All deploying individuals will be required to take any immunizations or medications that might be required for deployment to the theater of operations. All deploying individuals will also be administered a dental panorex and DNA sampling (where available) for identification purposes. Individuals requiring vision corrective lenses (glasses or contact lenses), will be required to have a government administered eye examination and will be issued optical inserts for the protective mask. You are not required to have the anthrax vaccination at this time. Currently, deployments to the Balkans do not require the anthrax immunizations. All DA civilians need to receive a post-deployment examination.

Q: What services are available to civilians and how much do the services cost?

A: Civilians have access to all mail, legal, medical, dental, dining facilities, telephone and laundry support services. These services will be provided at no cost.